

Exhibit E

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Draggieland to reschedule or relocate, organizers say

The annual drag show is "actively exploring alternate options"

Nicholas Gutteridge, Editor-in-Chief

The Queer Empowerment Council, or QEC, Draggieland's host and organizer, is "actively exploring alternate options" to reschedule or relocate the event after the Texas A&M System Board of Regents passed a resolution Friday afternoon banning on-campus drag shows, according to a statement.

"QEC firmly believes that the Board of Regents' decision undermines these values, which are vital to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for all students," the statement reads.

The resolution bans drag shows across the A&M System's 11 universities and passed in a unanimous vote. The resolution said that the Board finds allowing drag shows on campus "inconsistent with" the System's mission and Core Values, "including the value of respect for others."

Regent Mike Hernandez was not present for the special meeting. QEC's president, material sciences and engineering Ph.D. student Sophia Ahmed, was not informed of the decision until the resolution had passed.

"We are committed to ensuring that our voices are heard, and that Draggieland

will go on, no matter the obstacles we face," the statement reads.

The regents also instructed university presidents to cancel all upcoming drag shows on campus, a list that includes Draggieland, which was set for March 27 at Rudder Theatre. Current ticket holders will receive refunds starting Monday.

"We encourage those who wish to show their support to sign our petition at tx.ag/DragPetition, visit tx.ag/QECStore for donations, and purchase merchandise if you are in the Bryan-College Station area," the statement reads. "Your contributions will help us continue our mission of advocacy and representation."

The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, or FIRE, released a statement soon after the resolution passed deriding the decision.



Ashely Bautista

Drag queen Lily Adonis Kline performing to 'Roar' by Katy Perry during their head-to-head lip-sing battle with drag queen Hanna Santanna at the Draggieland show in Rudder Theater, Thursday March 28, 2024. (Ashely Bautista/The Battalion)

"It's a clear violation of the First Amendment," FIRE attorney Adam Steinbaugh told The Battalion. "The First Amendment protects students and student organizations at public universities when they want to engage in expressive activity. Drag is a long and storied form of art. It is a form of expression, and the university's ban on it on the basis that it might offend someone, that's just plain ole viewpoint discrimination — and it's forbidden by the First Amendment."

Steinbaugh said the "only way to prevent this kind of censorship is through legal action." FIRE currently represents Spectrum, a student group at West Texas A&M that is suing the university and its president after their drag show was canceled. The case is currently on appeal to the Fifth Circuit.

"This is a violation of First Amendment rights in ways that is going to cause more irreparable harm," Steinbaugh said.

A QEC member confirmed that the organization primarily funds its events through Draggieland, which sells out annually. The group also organizes the Lavender Graduation, a graduation event for LGBTQ+ students, and Coming Out Monologues, a platform for students to tell their coming-out stories.

"If through censorship you cut off the ability to sustain themselves, then you cut off a valuable way for people to be able to express themselves," Steinbaugh said. "That hurts not just the people in the group and not just this event, but other expressive forms or other expressions they engage in. That leads to a campus that has less expression on it."

When sent a list of questions, an A&M System spokesperson responded with the resolution. A university spokesperson said A&M was working to implement the directive.

"After the Board of Regents meeting today, the Texas A&M University administration began coordinating with the Division of Student Affairs to notify student organizations about the Board's decision," the statement reads. "As a part of the Texas A&M University System, the flagship university follows policies set by the Board."

Draggieland has not been sponsored or funded by the university since 2022.

Managing editor Ian Curtis, news editor J.M. Wise and design editor Kynlee Bright contributed to this story.